Providing Sea Transport Facilities, to Exporters of Tamil Nadu

41. SHRI S. MADHAVAN; Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the exporters of leather and readymade garments from Tamil Nadu are finding it diffi cult to export their goods by air to Europe and USA due to rise in air fare;

(b) whether they have demanded transportation facilities by sea; and

(c) if so, what are the details of action taken by the Central Government to help these exporters?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SHANTILAL PURUSHOTTAMDAS PATEL): (a) to ($_C$) There is mounting demand for air cargo capacity for carriage of export consignments of readymade garments and leather. Special arrangements including operation of additional flights by Air India and adoption of an Open Skies Policy have been made to meet this demand. Freight rates are revised from time to time in relation to costs. The sea mode of transportation supplements the cargo capacity and is resorted fo also in view of lower freight costs ana higher returns that it offers to exporters. Arrangements to meet the anticipated demand for air cargo capacity during the ensuing season and also to streamline carriage by sea and by sea-aid combination are being made in consultation with the concerned export promotion councils.

Mass Casual Leave taken Tjy the Customs Appraisers of Madras

45. SHRI S. MADHAVAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE! be pleased to state:

(a) whether Customs Appraisers at Madras struck work in October, 1990 by going on mass Casual Leave;

(b) if so, what were the reasons for such a move, and

(c) what action have been taken to redress their grievances?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (c) Customs Appraisers at Madras struck work on 15 October, 1990 by going on mass Casual Leave demanding confirmation, supply of tariff and other books, and representation in the Public Grievance Committee meetings. Collector of Customs, Madras has taken appropriate remedial measures to redress their grievances in the matter.

Trading with Country's Gold Reserve

46. SHRI S. MADHAVAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government and the Reserve Bank of India have discussed the possibility of trading, leasing or selling off a part of the country's gold reserves in order to cope with the piesent balance of payments crisis;

(b) if so^ what is the outcome of the discussion held; and

(c) whether there is any proposal to permit the Reserve Bank of India to revalue its reserves?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THK MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.